THE MARYLAND YELLOWTHROAT

A Publication of the Maryland Ornithological Society, Inc.

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MOS Board News

The MOS Board of Directors met at Miller Library in Howard County on March 24, 1990. Following are some highlights of the meeting.

FINANCIAL MATTERS.

Treasurer Emily Joyce stated that the Society is solvent, the current value of all funds being $138,475, but that several major bills which will soon come due will deplete the Operating Fund. Norm Chamberlain, upon presenting his first budget since taking position as chairman, explained that because the Operating Fund is out-of-date, its present structure has no bearing on current and future needs. The budgeted income for the Operating Fund is $13,000; the projected expenses are $22,000. Jo Solem, who had been studying the financial problem, indicated that the Society has a deficit operation. Dues are $6.00 a year, operating costs per person per year total $8.50. Because dues have not been changed since 1983, the Board approved a proposed dues revision:

Category	Current	Proposed
Individual	$6	$10
Household	$8	$15
Sustaining	$10	$25
Life	$200	$400
Junior	$1	$5

This proposal will be up for a vote at the Membership Meeting at the annual conference in June.

COMMITTEE REPORTS.

Budget. Chairman Norm Chamberlain's carefully compiled budget for May 1, 1990 through April 30, 1991, was studied, amended, and approved by the Board.

Bylaws. Lee Meinersmann presented a proposed amendment to the bylaws, which now require that all checks over $200 be signed by both the treasurer and the president. The proposed change would allow the treasurer to sign all checks for routine expenditures. Nearly half the checks exceed $200. This change will also come before the membership for a vote in June.

Conference 1990. Steve Hitchner showed the Board the registration brochure that was shortly to be mailed to all MOS members. He requested contributions for the Silent Auction that will be organized by Sally Rowe, 301-647-4519.

Conference 1991. It will be held May 24-26 at the National 4-H Center on Connecticut Avenue in Montgomery County.

Conservation. Chairman Richard Dolesh reported that the disposition of the 9,000 surplus acres at Fort Meade has become the most important issue in the state. The Army, desiring the money, wants to sell the land. Environmental groups and state and local governments do not want the land developed. Congress will make the final decision. Please write your representative!

(Continued on page 2, column 1)

Saving the Rain Forest

Bird club members are probably familiar with the grim facts concerning tropical deforestation. Cutting, burning and bulldozing is destroying an area of four city blocks per minute. From 1955 to 1985 40 percent of the world's rain forests disappeared. This destruction will wipe out Brazil's Rondonia forest in 25 years. Thousands of plant and animal species face extinction. Experts predict climatic changes, droughts, crop failures, and expansion of deserts throughout the world.

The ecological effects of this destruction reach into our own backyards. Many migratory birds that breed in Maryland spend their winters in tropical habitats. By the year 2000 many of our migrant songbirds will have lost half of their original wintering grounds.

It is not too late to turn the tide, however. Some industrial nations and the world banks are trying to devise a solution to the debt and poverty of developing countries. While they wait and hope for a permanent solution, many organizations are trying to preserve as much forest as possible by creating wildlife preserves. The Monteverde Conservation League on the Tilaran mountains of northern Costa Rica is a good example. Developed entirely with private contributions the preserve now covers about 30,000 acres.

In June 1989 the Baltimore Bird Club donated $1000 from the Martin Fund to Monteverde. They chose Monteverde for several reasons. The government of Costa Rica encourages land conservation and Monteverde is large enough to be viable. It has gained support of recognized environmental groups such as the Nature Conservancy, the World Wildlife Fund, and the Costa Rica National Parks Service. Also the National Parks Foundation, the Organization for Tropical Studies, and the Tropical Science Center support Monteverde. Monteverde has one of the richest biological communities anywhere. The bird life includes over 400 species, including many of our North American migrants and over 30 species of hummingbirds. Other groups show the same diversity. Four hundred and ninety species of butterflies, and 500 species of trees are

(Continued on page 2, column 2)

DNR Reports ...

The breeding season is upon us and DNR has been busy working with various breeding bird species. In addition to our annual nesting surveys of Bald Eagles and Peregrine Falcons, monies from the tax checkoff have enabled us to begin work on a number of other species. We continue to monitor colonial waterbirds through Chesapeake Bay funds.

Our Bald Eagle breeding population had a tremendous increase this year. Breeding pairs totaled 122 and the number that actually nested was 113. This compares to 97 pairs and 94 that nested last year. This is the first time since at least the 1950s that over 100 pairs have nested in Maryland. Very encouraging news!

Peregrine Falcons numbered seven breeding pairs again this year. Birds nested on the USF&G Building, Bay Bridge, Key Bridge, and four Eastern Shore towers. Peregrine activity was also observed at two other Eastern Shore towers, but no nesting was documented. Searches on cliffs along the Potomac and Susquehanna Rivers found nothing.

Colonial waterbird surveys were just recently begun, so look for more on this later. One thing to keep in mind; Least Terns have nested on various flat-roofed buildings throughout the Bay area, and if you regularly observe these birds flying to and from roof tops please let us know. There are probably a number of roofs on which Least Terns are nesting that we are not aware of.

A new breeding bird initiative started this year is targeting nocturnal marsh birds. We are trying to document the locations and relative population levels of Black Rail, King Rail, Virginia Rail, Sora, Least Bittern, American Bittern, Common Gallinule, and Pied-billed Grebe in the state. Many of these species have questionable breeding populations or are thought to be declining. Tax checkoff monies have allowed us to take an intensive look into this situation. In addition to collecting population data, we are trying to quantify the environmental conditions most appropriate for censusing these birds. Once it has been completed, some useful information for birdwatching may materialize as well.

(Continued on page 2, column 3)

(Board News, Con't. from pgae 1, column 1)

The state's non-tidal wetlands are still at risk. The program, scheduled to be implemented July '90, is subject to an 11th hour outcry by developers. A delaying bill, House #1365, will go before committee. MOS is not in favor of the bill.

Sanctuary. Dotty Mumford announced that MOS has received the conservation easement deed from the Maryland Environmental Trust for Mandares Creek Sanctuary. The easement for Marengo Woods is in the process of being approved.

Scholarship. Mildred Gebhard presented a list of winners of the Ecology and Ornithology Scholarships. She explained that for the first time there were requests for one-week sessions, so the Helen Miller award was converted to three one-week scholarships. The list of scholarship winners will appear elsewhere in *Yellowthroat*.

Atlas. John Cullom reported that the Atlas is in its final phase. The manuscript, including art, maps, charts and text, should be in the hands of Pittsburgh Press by November 1990. The publisher, who will pay prepublication expenses, thinks the final product will cost $25 -$30. Funding is a big problem, however, so the committee is looking for donations and matching funds.

Nominating. The following slate of officers for 1990-1991 was submitted by Chairman Melinda Byrd: President - John Malcolm; Vice President - Richard Dolesh; Treasurer - Emily Joyce; Secretary - Joan Stephens.

Publications. According to Chan Robbins, *Birdlife* is nearly current, so much so that reports for the June '90 issue must be turned in, double-spaced, no later than the June conference. This includes reports from chapter presidents, committees, and May count participants.

OLD BUSINESS.

Special MOS license plates. Mr. Dolesh was pleased to report that the DMV has finally provided him with application forms that will authorize MOS members to obtain the special plates. He provided chapter presidents with the forms, so interested members should check with their presidents.

OTHER BUSINESS.

Rob Ringler voiced his gratitude for the recent hospitality that the Back River Waste Water Treatment Plant extended to all birders during the Ross's gull's appearance there.

The next meeting of the Board will be held on June 9, 1990, at the Annual Conference, directly after the annual membership business meeting.

Patricia J. Moore
MOS Secretary

(Rain Forest, Con't. from page 1, column 2)

present. Also, 300 species of orchids and 200 species of ferns live in the Monteverde forest.

Our $1000 donation bought 20 acres of land. We received a certificate in recognition of our gift. For $2000 we can select a name for the tract.

A problem as big as saving the world's rain forests is intimidating but this is a chance to make an individual contribution. If you wish to participate in the preservation of this critical area, make a tax-deductible donation to the BBC MONTEVERDE FUND. Send your check to: Robert C. Wood, 3921 Miller Rd., Kingsville, Md., 21087.

The above notice appeared in the Baltimore Bird Club newsletter earlier this spring. If you are deciding where to make your tax deductible environmental contributions for the year please consider Monteverde. Your personal contribution is significant; remember, each fifty dollars buys and preserves an acre of rain forest.

John Cullom

ECOLOGY SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS 1990

Helen Miller Scholarship (1 week)
H. Carolyn Lipscomb
Teacher in Charge of Outdoor Education
Harford Glen Environmental Center

Helen Miller Scholarship (1 week)
Susan Moore
Park Naturalist
Regional Park Programmer
Washington, Frederick & Montgomery Counties

Helen Miller Scholarship (1 week)
Noelle Walker
Biology Major
Salisbury State University

Orville Crowder Memorial Scholarship
Linda Bystrak
Director-Teacher-Naturalist
Fairhill Nature Center

ORNITHOLOGY SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

Chandler S. Robbins Scholarship
Kate Irvine
Director, Students for Bay Action
Chesapeake Bay Foundation

Eleanor C. Robbins Scholarship
Joanne Laskowski
Environmental Educ. Coord.
Talbot County School System

Jimmy Wood & Edith Bourne Memorial Scholarship
Monica Cofiell
Biology Major
Salisbury State University

(DNR Con't. from page 1, column 3)

Northern Harriers are a breeding species that was documented occurring locally during the Breeding Bird Atlas project. Because of the remoteness of their breeding habitat, the Atlas may have under-represented Harrier populations. We have initiated a more intensive breeding survey for this species on the Eastern Shore. More to follow.

Grassland breeding birds have experienced population declines in Maryland over the last 20 years. We are investigating the causes of this decline and trying to initiate conservation programs for these species. The same is true of numerous forest interior breeding birds. The Critical Area Program does provide some habitat protection for the latter group of species, that we are working with.

Work on Barn Owls, Piping Plovers, Loggerhead Shrikes, Brown Pelicans and our game species is continuing. As you can see, the breeding season is a busy time of the year for DNR. Since paying attention to our breeding population is money well spent, we feel it is well worth the effort.

Glenn Therres

KEEP LOOKING

Want to add a lifer to your list? Then take a close look at Snowy Egrets this spring. More than 30 Little Egrets were seen in the 1980s in the Americas. Numbers began climbing in 1985, peaked in 1989, and five have already been seen in 1990. During the spring they are probably migrating from the Caribbean to northeastern North America with Snowy Egrets. Surely some pass through Maryland on their way to Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, where most of the sightings north of the Caribbean have been made. How do you identify a Little Egret? Look for a Snowy Egret with a dark face, not bright yellow as in the Snowy. The area between the base of the bill and the eye is known as the lores. It looks bluish or greenish in most Little Egrets, although one race has pale yellow lores. The most distinctive field mark in the spring is on the back of the head—two very long, thin plumes. The Snowy has a bush of plumes on the back of the head and neck. Besides their loral color and the presence of plumes, Little Egrets can be picked out of flocks of Snowies by their taller stance, hunching over less than Snowies. Little Egrets are very closely related to Western Reef-Herons, which look like Little Blue Herons with white chins, black legs, and yellow feet. One was seen at Sandy Hook, New Jersey, just last May. Why not look for both species and add two lifers? Either species would be a new one for the Maryland list.

Bill Murphy

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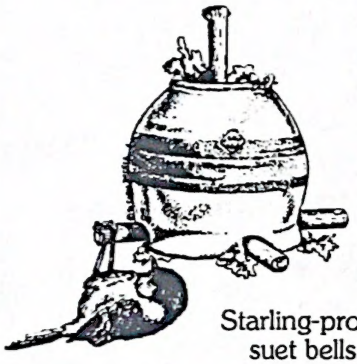

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MOS Calendar— June/August, 1990

Wednesday, June 20
MEETING. Jug Bay. Annual picnic meeting, bring a dish. 6:00 p.m. at Patuxent River Park. The coordinators are Joan & Wally Stephens, 423-8230.

Saturday, June 23
FIELD TRIP. Harford. Huntley Meadows. Nesting bitterns, night-herons, grebes, prothonotary warblers. Meet at 6:30 a.m. at Rt. 152/I-95 Park & Ride. All day, bring lunch. The leader is Ed Weigel and the coordinator is Randy Robertson, 273-9029.

Wednesday, July 18
MEETING. Jug Bay. "Aerial Photography—A Bird's-Eye View," by Cameron Davidson. 7:00 p.m. at Patuxent River Park.

Saturday, July 21
FIELD TRIP. Harford. Otter Point Marsh Canoe Trip. Marsh wrens, waterfowl, eagles. Meet at John Smith Park at 7:30 a.m. 1/2-day, canoes needed! For further details, contact the leader, Robert Van Trigt, at 838-5459.

Saturday, August 11
FIELD TRIP. Baltimore. Bombay Hook NWR. Special shorebirds. Meet 9 a.m. at Visitor Center. The leader is Pete Webb, 486-1217.

Wednesday, August 15
FIELD TRIP. Jug Bay. Rail Trip. Limited numbers.

Saturday, August 18
FIELD TRIP. Harford. Brigantine NWR. Shorebirds, herons, waterfowl, peregrines possible. Meet at Rts. 222 & 40 at 7 a.m. All day, bring lunch. The leaders are John Cupp, Sr. and Jr., 838-5659.

Wednesday, September 19
MEETING. Jug Bay. "Florida Birding," by John Taylor. 7:00 p.m. at Patuxent River Park.

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Patrons For Atlas Publication Sought

The Maryland Breeding Bird Atlas Committee is soliciting contributions for the publication of the Atlas book, scheduled to be completed by the 1991 MOS Convention. In particular, anyone who contributes $100 or more will be listed in the book as a Patron. Take this opportunity to be permanently recorded as a financial contributor to the Atlas project. Checks should be sent to John Cullom, 437 S. Paradise Ave., Baltimore, MD 21228. The University of Pittsburgh Press has been officially selected as the publisher and work is steadily progressing.

Mini Lecture

Torpidity

All animals rely on food metabolism in order to provide them with the energy they need to sustain life. This energy helps an animal move, reproduce, grow, and maintain its body temperature. Birds, being relatively small animals, have a higher basal or resting metabolism than other animals. This, coupled with the high energy demand associated with flight, requires that birds take in a large amount of food in order to maintain life. To accomplish this high energy need, birds usually eat high energy foods and have developed many adaptations in order to cope with their needed energy demands. One adaptation is torpidity.

Torpidity is the reduction of bodily function that results in the conservation of energy. This reaction is usually associated with cold or stress and has been recorded in three bird families: the hummingbirds, the swifts, and the nightjars. In these families, body temperature is reduced, breathing and heart rate become negligible, and the bird can be handled without arousal. Torpidity provides birds with a rest during times of scarce food supply or during times of severe cold.

The longest known period of torpidity has been recorded in the Poorwill, which has been found asleep or "in hibernation" for three months. During this time, the Poorwill lives on stored fat in order to await spring and the arrival of insects.

While other behavior patterns have been used by birds in order to cope with the demands of the environment, torpidity allows birds to stay in a designated area, avoid the hazards of migration, and withstand a lack of food or harsh climate and survive.

Joseph M. Lewandowski

EXPLORE TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO WITH BILL MURPHY

Treat yourself to a splendid birding holiday. Savor these lush islands from Sept. 15-25 with the author of A Birder's Guide to Trinidad and Tobago. No tedious transfers between accommodations -- we're based at the unforgettable Asa Wright Nature Centre in Trinidad and the tranquil Kariwak Inn on tiny Tobago. Lots of MOS personal references. Contact Bill Murphy, 7202 Mathew Street, Greenbelt, Maryland 20770, (301) 474-1880.

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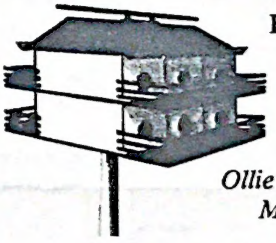

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Norm and Fran Saunders
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Colesville, MD 20904
H: 301-989-9035
W: 202-272-5248

Please send all other materials to the editor:

Mark L. Hoffman
313 Fernwood Dr.
Severna Park, MD 21146
H: 301-647-7227
W: 301-974-3195

c/o Helen Ford
408 Beach Dr.
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Phil & Barbara Davis
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